LISTING OF CLAIMS

1. (Previously presented) A method of fabricating a semiconductor device comprising the steps of:

forming a gate dielectric layer on a semiconductor substrate;

forming a gate electrode over the gate dielectric layer wherein the gate electrode defines a channel interposed between source/drain regions formed within an active region of the semiconductor substrate;

forming contact etch resistant spacers on sidewalls of the gate electrode and sidewalls of the gate dielectric layer, the contact etch resistant spacers being of a non-silicon oxide and a non-nitride material; and

forming a liner layer over the contact etch resistant spacers of at least one of Si_xN_y and SiO_xN_y.

2. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of forming the contact etch resistant spacers includes the steps of:

forming a contact etch resistant layer on the sidewalls of the gate electrode, the sidewalls of the gate dielectric and portions of the upper surface of the semiconductor substrate; and

etching the contact etch resistant layer to form the contact etch resistant spacers.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2, further including the step of:

forming the contact etch resistant layer of at least one of silicon carbide and undoped silicon.

4. (Canceled)

5. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, further including the step of:

forming a silicon-oxide interlevel dielectric layer over the liner layer.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5, further including the step of:

forming a contact mask over the interlevel dielectric layer; and

etching a contact aperture to expose a source/drain region.

7-27. (Canceled)

28. (Previously presented) A method of fabricating a semiconductor device, comprising:

forming a gate dielectric layer on a semiconductor substrate;

forming a gate electrode over the gate dielectric layer wherein the gate electrode defines a channel interposed between source/drain regions formed within an active region of the semiconductor substrate;

forming spacers on sidewalls of the gate electrode, the spacers having etch selectivity with respect to silicon oxide and silicon nitride;

forming an interlevel dielectric layer over the gate electrode and the spacers;

forming a contact mask over the interlevel dielectric layer;

etching a contact aperture to simultaneously expose one of the source or the drain and at least a portion of an adjacent spacer; and

filing the contact aperture with a conductive material to form a contact that is electrically coupled to the one of the source or drain and is electrically isolated from the gate electrode, the contact touching the spacer in the portion exposed by the etching and the spacer providing physical and electrical isolation between the contact and the gate electrode.

29. (Previously presented) The method of claim 28, wherein forming the spacers includes:

forming a spacer material layer on the sidewalls of the gate electrode, the sidewalls of the gate dielectric and portions of the upper surface of the semiconductor substrate; and

etching the spacer material layer to form the spacers.

30. (Previously presented) The method of claim 28, wherein the spacers are silicon carbide.

31. (Previously presented) The method of claim 28, wherein the spacers are undoped silicon.

32. (Previously presented) The method of claim 28, further including forming a silicon nitride liner layer between the spacers and the interlevel dielectric layer.

33. (Previously presented) The method of claim 28, further including forming a silicon oxynitride liner layer between the spacers and the interlevel dielectric layer.

34. (Previously presented) The method of claim 28, wherein the spacers have a width of between 200 angstroms and 400 angstroms.

35. (Previously presented) The method of claim 28, further including forming a liner layer of a nitrogen containing dielectric material between the spacers and the interlevel dielectric layer, and the etching a contact aperture includes etching a portion of the interlevel dielectric layer and a portion of the liner layer